CENTERS OF MUSEMENT

DESIGNING SACRED SPACES FOR POST ENLIGHTENMENT RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Centers of Musement. (May 2013)

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Due to vast changes in religious thinking, an attempt to rethink, and ultimately explode and recreate, religious typology in architecture as it exists becomes necessary. An intense review on existential and pragmatic religious literature leads to the conclusion that the subject of sacred architecture has changed, creating a need to develop a new typology. After arguing the justification of this rethinking, the paper examines literature regarding religious typology as it currently exists and its relationship to the city, the idea of monument and its appropriateness for religious architecture, and the relationship between shared memory and sacred spaces. Finally, the ideas gleaned are applied to three distinct urban fabrics in an attempt to further analyze the theoretical space and produce prototypical models for the fabrics addressed. From these studies an archetypal model of an ideal sacred architecture is created for all three urban conditions.

DEDICATION

To those who struggle with the eternal.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"One became great by expecting the possible; another by expecting the eternal, but the one who expected the impossible became greater than everybody. Each will be remembered, but each was great wholly in proportion to the magnitude of that with which he struggled."

-Søren Kierkegaard

This paper aims to help alleviate the religious rift that has grown in our society through architectural means. Indeed, it has always seemed strange to me that though we continually rethink the home, the office, the projects, the city, the school, and the government building that so little effort is put into rethinking our religious buildings; which have in essence changed little in conception from the original Romanesque basilicas. Of course architects still design houses of worship, but there seems to be a great lack of revolutionary theory about them. Le Corbusier sought to completely change the home and Colin Rowe sought to change our reading of the city, yet no one seems to be endeavoring to rethink one of our most fundamental, ancient, and most personal typologies. This, I think, is due to the societal implications of such a rethinking. After all, a revolution is only necessary if the rules of religion have changed in a fundamental way. Due to their implications, we are afraid to admit these changes when they occur more than we are to admit the same changes in other areas that rule other typologies. After all, Corbusier did not risk his mortal soul by designing the Villa Savoye.

Unfortunately, there can be no doubt that the turn of the century and the modern revolution brought about great change in religious ideas. The existentialists, the linguists, and other such philosophical groups gained power and influence as the moral argument for the existence of God eroded in the face of the two world wars. Politics and science also conspired to upend the conventional grip of Christendom, with Marx declaring religion to be merely a bourgeois parlor trick and Darwin revealing his theories of evolution and the subsequent origin of the world as we know it. Of course the idea that God might not exist was not a new one, however previous to this there was always the inability to explain the origins of humanity that made a total disbelief in God hard to grasp as a society. Once these reigns were loosened on human thinking, religion and religious experience became more complex as atheism and humanism rose to prominence with the aid of thinkers such as Thomas Dewey. The natural response to this of the church has been dogmatism, fundamentalism, and a growing feeling of extremism in religions such as Islam, Christianity, and others.

For the first time the relationship between God and man was no longer a vertical one where God presided over the humans meekly worshipping at his feet without question. The relationship could now be horizontal as the average man questioned God with an approach that could almost be seen as deconstructivist in nature. This creates a certain inadequacy in practicing solely group worship as each devotee now has the opportunity to create his or her own theories about their faith, and for the first time in history is truly free to choose his or her faith. This is exacerbated in part by the religious community as it digs deeper into the annals of blind faith and dogma in a desperate gambit to not lose its heritage and pervasiveness in society. In a world where it seems that science and religion are perpetually at odds with each other and in which our political

ideologies become more sharply divided on religious grounds—where it is almost impossible to hear oneself think above the din of voices shouting for dominance—there becomes a clear need for an architecture that encourages a responsible religion.

It has occurred to me that this need is a particularly western one, as eastern religions tend to encourage individual as opposed to group practice as a core value. With the exceptions of Confucianism and the state Shinto extolled by Japan in the Second World War, eastern faiths teach that religious fulfillment and enlightenment can only be reached as an single person and not as a societal whole, evidenced by the lack of missionaries for most eastern faiths. For this reason, I find it only necessary to discuss western religions, and thus the architectural ideals discussed to confront the religious rift will be western derivations and theories.

Furthermore, in light of the possibility of controversy that this paper may invite (and I hope, to a certain degree will incite); I find it rather necessary to define what this thesis is not. This thesis is not a religious or philosophical argument, but a purely architectural one. Although the works of prominent philosophers are referenced and discussed, this is not to discover some new and glaring aspect of religion and its current practice. I only wish to discuss religion enough to create what I feel is a strong argument justifying the need to seriously reexamine sacred architecture and thrust it into the realm of individual, single person units. Though I believe the religious analysis I will present to be correct, if one does not believe it, it does not matter a great deal to me. The religious argument is not the cause of the architecture this thesis will produce, but instead is an opportunity for architecture to utilize in order to rethink its basic assumptions. My main concern in this project is to advance the architectural theory of the sacred, to explore

new ways in which we can induce religious experience through architecture, and to have a serious discussion of how we can use religious philosophy as a tool to advance the architectural discourse. Philosophy does not cause the architecture. Architecture is the philosophy.

Is a new thinking of sacred architecture a need of contemporary religious philosophy? How does the way we form this architecture change when put into different context? Does sacred architecture have a fundamental need to be associated with our idea of the monument? Does it stand aloof from the city as a component or do we utilize the urban fabric and the idea of the genus loci? How do we invite sacred presence into our architecture when its typology has been so radically altered? These are the questions posed, and to answer them and other pressing issues we must bravely risk the architectural heretical. Only then will we be able to envision how our practice might better suit the needs of the modern man of faith.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

The arguments of this paper and the design following them were produced after an intense session on literary review, first on the subject of religion itself to set the basic arguments and then on religious architecture and the city to determine the qualities of the final design and their placement. From this point of departure, and the search space generated by architectural theory, a prototypical design is reached and then further adapted to fit three different urban conditions. This is further informed by coursework taken at Texas A&M University in both religious philosophy and urban studies and personal experience in the three cities analyzed.

CHAPTER III

THE RELIGIOUS RIFT

"Different people have such wonderfully different ways of thinking, that it would be far beyond my competence to say what courses Musements might not take; but a brain endowed with automatic control, as man's indirectly is, is so naturally and rightly interested in its own faculties that some psychological and semi-psychological questions would doubtless get touched"

-Charles Sanders Pierce

Let us first begin by determining what religious philosophical thinking we can use to help shape our new religious typology. This will help to give us a general direction and help us to choose what aspects of current typology to carry over into the new. It is also helpful to show that there is a place in the world outside of the architectural discourse for our interventions. Thus, this chapter will contain a two part argument: part one in which we will examine the ever changing religious demographics of our times and their implications; and part two in which we examine and study western post enlightenment religious philosophy (mostly that of Søren Kierkegaard and Charles Sanders Pierce) to explore new philosophical ideas on the subject of faith that have had a profound impact on the theological world. If we find that both arguments indicate the need for this type of intervention, then we can be free to continue our pursuit of a new mode of sacred architecture. If they do not, then we can stop wasting time and turn our attention to other more pressing issues.

Historically at least, it is obvious that religion is constantly changing. What first started out as a state mandated practice in ancient times has gradually become more open to interpretation and individual choice, finally culminating in a belief system that can truly be chosen by an individual. This depth of choice is a relatively new phenomenon in the course of human culture, and the gradual removal of the church from the state is marked clearly in court decisions such as Engel v Vitale[1], which sharply discourage the imposition of a religion upon a member of society and place the burden of the choice of religion almost totally onto an individual or family. A report by the Pew Research Center shows the effects of this liberation on the population of the United States. According to surveys conducted by the center, 16.1% of the population does not adhere to any particular religion, those being divided into atheists (1.6% of the population), agnostics (2.4%), those who do not find a belief system to be important at all (6.3%) and those who do not associate with a particular religion but are still spiritual (5.8%). In addition to this, the study "finds that constant movement characterizes the American religious marketplace, as every major religious group is simultaneously gaining and losing adherents. Those that are growing as a result of religious change are simply gaining new members at a faster rate than they are losing members. Conversely, those that are declining in number because of religious change simply are not attracting enough new members to offset the number of adherents who are leaving those particular faiths" (The Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life, 2008). Perhaps most telling, the survey suggests, is the growth of unaffiliated Americans, whose gain to loss ratio is three to one (the largest gain to loss ratio in the study). It would seem, however, that about half

[1] Engel v Vitale was the US Supreme Court case in which it was decided that a child could not be told to recite a mandatory prayer in the classroom. Rather notable about this ruling is that the prayer in question was not for a specific religion, and the ruling invalidated even the concept of religion itself being encouraged by the state.

of those who were unaffiliated as children are now adherents to a specific religion. (The Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life, 2008).

The study also makes predictions into the religious pandemonium of the future, by warning that the younger respondents 18-25 years old were much more likely than their counterparts 70 years of age or older to be unaffiliated by a margin of 25% to 8%. The faith currently experiencing this statistical upheaval the most dramatically is the Catholic Church. Upon first glance, it would seem that Catholicism has remained rather steady in population for the past few decades; however on closer inspection it seems that this is a result of the large influx of Catholic immigrants to the country. The Forum approximates that one third of their respondents who were raised Catholic are no longer a part of the faith, even nominally. This means that 10% of the United States population was once Catholic and has changed their religious beliefs enough to justify removing themselves from an entire faith system (The Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life, 2008).

Although these statistics are only for the United States and cannot be said to be proportional to the entire western world, they are still paradigmatic of the results of the creation of a culture of independent belief, where one no longer risks being killed or criminalized for failing to conform to a certain religious system. Under these conditions, with most religions desperately trying to hold on to adherents and attract those that others have lost, it is completely justifiable to create an intervention of this sort, for while a person is wandering from religion to religion, it is a grave oversight that they have no completely impartial place to reflect on this. One could argue that they should be able to attain this knowledge in the house, but I think it can well be asserted that

the house, full of the distractions of daily habit, responsibilities, and the ever present bombardment of technology and interpersonal connection definitive of our post modern society, is no place for quiet, independent religious reflection. And what of the atheist, agnostic, and independently spiritual? Where do the multiplying religious nonconformists go to meditate on their beliefs? With all of these questions currently unaddressed by architecture, it would seem that, statistically at least, this intervention is not only justifiable but necessary.

Of course, one may find this religious wandering an unacceptable phenomenon to be discouraged. One could put up an argument of religious tradition, and that to question God is tantamount to blasphemy and has no place in religious thinking or doctrine. Certainly this viewpoint has been espoused by various faiths in many historical eras. Thus, although our intervention can be justified statistically, it becomes necessary to determine whether or not these interventions are responsible and defensible in a moral and spiritual way. One should never make an architectural movement without first determining the responsibility and the social ramifications of said movement. The question becomes not "is there justification for these spaces?", for surely there is, but "will these spaces help to create more responsible and truly faithful adherents?"

For this, we turn to the writings of Søren Kierkegaard, the first existential philosopher. Unlike Nietzsche or Sartre, Kierkegaard is notable as a profoundly religious existentialist, who, like Nietzsche, saw the void of nothingness, but unlike Nietzsche leaped into the void, challenging God to catch him if he existed, and emphasizing that God had indeed caught him. Kierkegaard's arguably most famous work is *Fear and Trembling* (2006), in which he begins to make a case for

the faith of the individual as opposed to the faith of the masses. In Abraham's quest to become a knight of faith[2], the only state in which Abraham can justify his willingness to sacrifice his beloved son to God, he must ignore the universal morality that society impresses upon him and that God has ordained for common men that directs him to love, protect, and not harm his children. Through intense meditation and struggle, Abraham is able to realize God's call to him individually and ascend to a new level of Christianity in which he can have enough faith in God to be willing to carry out the deed. He asserts that only alone can one reach this state and illustrates in the following:

> "The one knight of faith cannot help the other at all. Either the single individual himself becomes the knight of faith by assuming the paradox or he never becomes one. Partnership in these areas is utterly unthinkable. Any more detailed explanation of what is to be understood by Isaac can be given by the single individual always only to himself. And even if one could determine ever so precisely, generally speaking, what is to be understood by Isaac (which then, incidentally, would be the most ludicrous self-contradiction—to bring the single individual, who stands precisely as the singe individual who is outside the universal), the single individual would never be able to convince himself of this through others, only by himself as the single individual. Therefore, even if a person were cowardly and base enough to want to become a knight of faith on someone else's responsibility, he certainly would not become one."

In Kierkegaard's view, faith is highly personal, and must be made alone. The fact that no one else could understand Abraham's faith made Abraham a greater believer, for he came to the belief on his own, and thus could be sure he truly believed it. If another man had told Abraham to sacrifice his son to God, Abraham surely would have though him mad, and if Abraham had

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[2] In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard describes a Knight of Faith as one who has the ability to believe in the absurd. Abraham is a knight of faith because he believes in God so much that when God has asked for him to sacrifice his only son with his own bare hands, he has faith enough to absurdly believe that he will sacrifice Isaac and that God will make it work out well in the end, and moreover work out before the end of Abraham's life so that he will still have Isaac. This of course makes no logical sense, and Kierkegaard praises this absurd idea as the true definition of faith.

tried to seek the guidance of one of his friends in his troubles, his friend would have surely told Abraham that the commandment was no act of God and that Abraham should not sacrifice Isaac, and Abraham would have failed the test God put before him. The Patriarch's ability to meditate in solitude on the test allowed him to pass it and made Abraham a better follower of God and a saint, for Abraham "was great wholly in proportion to the magnitude of that with which he struggled." (Kierkegaard, 2006).

But maybe expecting every believer of every religion to be a Knight of Faith is a bit unrealistic. Perhaps solitary meditation is only necessary and proper for those who aspire to reach a heightened sense of belief. Kierkegaard, after all, does concede that he himself is incapable of becoming a Knight of Faith, and that most people are, which only adds to his wonder and love of Abraham. Furthermore, Kierkegaard famously wrote in personas who would offer frequently contrasting opinions and suggestions. Sometimes one is only able to know what Kierkegaard truly encouraged and discouraged by looking at what he suggested in multiple personas. Luckily, *Fear and Trembling* is not the only place where he discusses the idea of faith and its subjectivity, and Johannes de Silentio is not the only mouthpiece he uses to argue the notion.

In Rick Anthony Furtak's book *Kierkegaard's "Concluding Unscientific Postscript"*, Furtak compiles a series of analytical essays on the titular philosophical work and the ideas of its "narrator," Climacus. In this book, he includes an essay (which he himself wrote) where he discusses Kierkegaard's continuing assertion that faith, and indeed some truth itself, is subjective in nature and can only be reached on an individual basis. In "Concluding Unscientific Postscript", Furtak argues, one of Climacus' "goal[s] is to remind us of what sort of truth can and

cannot be properly understood as "objective" in the sense that it is somehow independent of subjectivity, or purified of any element that is unique to the human perspective" (Furtak, 2010). There are clear truths about the world that can be validated or invalidated by science and logic, like the fact that three and three equal six, but these claims are impersonal and are unimportant, at least existentially. The real questions and substance of life, things like faith and ethics, lack this universality. A person who asserts that they are unquestioning in their convictions and their belief has rather misunderstood the point. An overarching dogma is simply a philosophical folly, and to reduce faith and any other subjective idea to one overarching rule, whether imparted from a pulpit or a part of a systemic belief like the one that Hegel suggests, is to remove the difficulty and reality from the question. In effect, it is to cheat (Furtak, 2010).

Although Kierkegaard makes the most eloquent and logical argument in support of the idea of individual religion, he is not the only one to argue this, and existentialism is not the only belief system that thrusts religion into the realm of the subjective. Charles Sanders Pierce, widely regarded as the father of pragmatism, raises what he calls "The Neglected Argument"; an argument for the existence of God that I believe can be effectively used to also emphasize the importance of solitary religious experience. The argument, also known as Musement, states that religion is the ultimate good (if it can be definitely proven) so if it can be definitely proven there would be an obvious way to conclude that God exists "that should be obvious to all minds, high and low alike, that should earnestly strive to find the truth of the matter" (Pierce, 1908). This argument is so basic that it can be, and is best, reached while the mind is at peace. Pierce calls this state of mind Musement and thinks of it in a pragmatic way. Musement "begins passively

enough with drinking in the impression of some nook of one of the three Universes[3]. But impression soon passes into attentive observation, observation into musing, musing into a lively give-and-take of communion between self and self" (Pierce, 1908). Because this communion must be internal, Musement becomes a personal activity- something that is different for every person, combining all of their past experiences in a unique way. Thus a scientist may stumble upon the Neglected Argument through his knowledge of science and the wonders of the universe when he finds science and strict logic insufficient to explain every mystery of the world, an artist when he wonders where his inspiration is birthed, and so on. Although the results of Musement and theories stemming from it could be shared in a group, the act itself must occur on an individual level (Pierce, 1908).

An experience like the one that Kierkegaard describes and Pierce hopes to facilitate is more formally known as a "hierophany". A hierophany is an experience that transcends this world, where one can see reality for what it truly is and see the sacred in relation to it; and in a form of worship where the subject is singular and subjective instead of a collective group, it is the ultimate goal. Thus the architecture of a singular religious space should be created to accommodate this need as best it can.

This can be difficult to design for. After all, what exactly encourages a hierophany? In the next few chapters we will examine and discuss major factors that would contribute to this experience

[3] The first universe contains the idea of things, such as mathematics or poetry or Plato's idea of the perfect, ideal objects. The second is reality as we know it and the third is concerned with connections between things inside or between the other two universes.

and facilitate the event, first by examining the ways in which current typology attempts to address this challenge.

CHAPTER IV

TYPOLOGY AND THE QUESTION OF NEARNESS

"And Allah sets forth as an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh: Behold she said: 'O my Lord! build for me in nearness to Thee a mansion in the Garden and save me from Pharaoh and his doings and save me from those that do wrong'"

-Quran 66:11 (Yusuf Ali Translation)

If we are to change the focus of our architecture from the collective subject of yesteryear to the new subject- the man in his subjective faith, or the singular subjective subject, we may jettison religious typology as it currently exists. Surely a change in subject calls for a massive change in design. The ultimate goal is a new typology in which to encounter the eternal. However, there may be aspects of current typology that are still helpful to produce a hierophany, and thus the current thinking on sacred spaces warrants some dissection.

Fortunately for us we have already made a decision that spares us quite a bit of research into specific case studies. Because we have decided that the sacred spaces will be non-denominational and impartial, all liturgical aspects of current typology can be ignored. There is no need for a mihrab, as we are not designing with Islam in mind, just as there is no need for any type of altar, which is a decidedly Judeo-Christian idea (though the idea of the earliest altars is an interesting one, which shall be expounded upon later). We do not have to worry about aligning an axis towards any orientation as is necessary in all three faiths (towards Mecca for Islam,

towards Jerusalem for Judaism, and a traditional, if not always followed, preference for an east/west orientation in Christianity). In fact if we are to design a truly non-denominational space one could argue that these orientations should be avoided altogether, and that there should be no noticeable axis in the sacred places themselves. To be completely sure, it can be determined that to be neutral they must be of a decidedly non-Platonic, amorphous quality with absolutely no focal point. Luckily this is rather easy to accomplish in a single-occupancy space. Furthermore, there does not need to be any type of ceremonial fixtures. The processional set up of the Cathedrals can be aborted, for there is no longer a need for procession. Symbolism, as a general rule, should be avoided unless the symbol is universal so as not to bias our architecture towards any one faith.

Once we strip these unnecessary factors away, we are left with a volume. This volume has no inherent direction, meaning, or particular name. It is almost a womb for the worshipper. But without crosses, calligraphy, Torahs, or alignments, how is one to know that they are in a sacred place? Once we strip the mental association of a place with of labels such as "church", "temple", "mosque", and the like, how do we facilitate Kierkegaard's leap?

The answer to this question mercifully delves into the purely architectural realm, for the most part independent of areas such as symbol and aesthetic. As Douglas Hoffman points out in his book, *Seeking the Sacred in Contemporary Religious Architecture* (2010), there are many examples of places of worship that try to not look like the stereotypical, steeple-endowed American church. Mega churches such as the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California strive to not look like a church at all in order to attract devotees who might be hesitant to enter

into a traditional worship setting. They look like suburban shopping malls, with piecemeal features such as bookstores, fitness centers, and food courts designed to feel familiar to the American suburbanite. These facilities "are decidedly and conscientiously non-sacred spaces. Nevertheless, some of these facilities employ the same techniques honed by architects over the centuries to cast a particular sense of otherness, an inexplicable sense of place" (Hoffman, 2010).

Though Hoffman is here analyzing the suburban mega-structure, it is easy to argue that this otherness should remain the same for the singular subjective space. This sense of otherness is a sense of a possible hierophany. According to Hoffman, the anthropologist Mircea Eliade had a fundamental part in defining our idea of a sacred space. To him, because a building had the ability to connect a worshipper with god, a sacred space could be seen as a sort of metaphysical terra incognita. A sacred place is a place where the eternal intrudes upon the mortal world; a place that is located in this sphere but not necessarily a part of it, much in the way that embassies are pieces of different nations embedded into the fabric of their host countries. Religious buildings are spaces of transportation- architectural vehicles where one embarks on a journey through the eternal rather than physical space. When a person crosses the threshold into a sacred area, they move from the terrestrial realm into the spiritual, without actually leaving the physical world. (Hoffman, 2010).

When we take this into the realm of architecture, this must be an argument of affect. To create this transportation, we must create an architecture that makes the visitor feel a sense of the eternal in order to facilitate a hierophany.

Although Hoffman mentions it in passing, it is obvious to me that this ability to transport and produce a hierophany, heretofore referred to as "nearness", is the single most important defining aspect of the singular subjective sacred space, especially once normal typology has been stripped away. This idea is rather compatible with the historical roots of the religious building. If we look at the development of the idea of the Temple in the Torah, especially the Pentateuch, we encounter places of pure hierophany. The further back we go in time the less defined the place for the worship of YHWH becomes and the more rules are stripped away, the closer we come to a purely sacred space. The first places of worship mentioned in Genesis are not buildings at all, but altars where the patriarchs encountered God and then marked the spot of the hierophany retroactively to remember the significance of the place. The spaces needed nothing more than a religious experience to be sacred. This pure connection between a man and his god only becomes more muddled as the Israelite's religious architecture becomes more complex and hierarchical, culminating in the Temple, where this nearness was only afforded to the priests.

This is, of course, the opposite of what Kierkegaard and Pierce would advocate. We must move more towards the idea of the altar rather than the idea of the glorious Temple, yet the complexity of the Temple may give us a lesson in ritual. To walk to the highest area they were permitted, the Jews had to go through every lower court first, passing through multiple gates on their ways. This ritual movement through space, though not a typical ritual action in the way most usually think of them (i.e. the sacraments), can be a strong trigger for hierophany in itself, forcing the worshipper to perform a specific set of actions or to navigate a specific route to mentally separate them from the mundane world through complex way-finding. This ritual allows the pilgrim to mentally prepare (and creates a pseudo-Pavlovian trigger) for a hierophany.

Some have argued, however, that this ritual is not necessarily architectural in nature. In his essay "Spatiality, Practice and Meaning", Peter Nynäs discusses a chapel in a suburban shopping mall called The Big Apple. The chapel is run by volunteers, and Nynäs observes how they seem to create their own rituals for setting up and maintaining the chapel even though no guidelines are given except those most fundamental to the space's upkeep. The volunteers dramatize and ritualize these duties whether they intend to or not. Adding more significance to their duties, each volunteer has their own distinct set of rituals revolving around when they volunteered, what actions they performed, and in what sequence they did them. Perhaps most telling of their subconscious ritualizing is a phenomenon observed when "many of them were not able to volunteer during the summer time. This break in their routines was sometimes experienced as troublesome" (Nynäs, 2009). This hints that the ritual is not necessarily the architect's responsibility, and can be overlooked with confidence that the adherent will create the rituals that best suit their worship on their own, so long as they feel a sense of nearness in the already existing architecture. While I believe this to be credible, it is folly to completely discredit the possibility of a standardized architectural ritual. Because it is produced externally rather than internally, the more concrete ritual is more apt to become tantamount in the worshipper's mind.

Nynäs seems to argue that the perfect space for the subjective singular worshipper is the urban chapel embedded in the mall, airport, or other such area. They are silent, usually used by single people, and are rather easily self-maintaining. Nynäs does admit some failure to the space, however. He brings attention to the lack of a sacred character to the chapel. It simply does not look like a sacred building normally would from the outside and blends in too well with its

surroundings. The severity of this problem is illustrated when the author describes a christening ceremony he witnessed at the chapel. After the ceremony, remarks are made in which one interview subject comments that she was excited "to come to a christening ceremony in a shopping mall'" (Nynäs, 2009). While Nynäs seems to underplay the importance of this, it is a critical failure on the part of the chapel. How can one expect to engage in Musement or make the Leap of Faith in a sacred space if they think they are merely in a shopping mall? The Temple of Jerusalem lost all sense of nearness to all but the most privileged to it (the priests and high priest) because of hierarchy. The chapel loses all sense of nearness to all but the most involved with it (the volunteers) by a simple lack of distinction.

Clearly there is a limit to the amount of integration a sacred space can have with its context. A sacred space, in order to create a hierophany, must then have some unique architectural features that create a feeling of singularity. Hoffman seems to think that he has distilled these elements. He lists a series of architectural and archetypal elements that he believes to be shared by most sacred buildings in a unique way. Unfortunately, Hoffman's word cannot be taken at face value. As with most lists of archetypes; some of the listed elements are simply too broad to be of much use or to really be singular to any specific realm like sacred architecture. For example, Hoffman cites the use of sacred symbolic geometries such as the circle, square, and platonic solids along with triangles and the ratio of phi (albeit to a lesser extent) as archetypal elements of the sacred in architecture. However, these shapes can be found in almost every design based on their fundamental nature. Hoffman attempts to illustrate this by drawing squares and circles onto the plans of religious architecture, however he invalidates his own argument by leaving visible gaps between the shapes, indicating that the sacred space is ovular or rectangular in reality. This

symbolic argument, as well as the other arguments of archetype, can be jettisoned. Surely it is more useful to focus on the aspects of existing typology that are more palpable to the worshipper.

Hoffman's work is not totally useless to us, however, and he illustrates three factors that are actually quite useful. These are the arguments that can create true affect. Taken from the work of the German theologian Rudolph Otto, they deal with the ambiguities of architectural atmosphere present in many religious spaces. Otto mentions the difference between silence and noise in religious spaces, as well as their echo-inducing qualities. God, Otto (and thus Hoffman) argues, speaks in the little half heard murmurs and sounds that bounce around cathedrals; or in the ring that travels down the nave after the choir has finished their last note. During these states of acoustic change, a hierophany may occur. This argument rings of truth, and surely anyone who has felt chills during a significant musical change or fade can relate to the phenomenon. The same ambiguity is brought to the idea of lighting. The example is given of a gothic cathedral and its clerestory windows. As can be seen in Figure 1 below, only the nave is illuminated, flooded with light, while the aisles and chapels radiating around the altar are cast in a half gloom, punctured by twinkling candlelight. While the worshipper stands at their pew or kneels with the glow of candlelight around them, they are enveloped in a dark, mysterious twilight where anything is possible. I imagine this effect to be much the same as when we think we see something move in the shadows when nothing is actually present. If used wisely, we can utilize this to great effect. The final atmospheric quality Hoffman asserts is one that is surely present in religious architecture, but is completely antithetical to our needs- the idea of humility and scale. This is also well embodied in the gothic cathedrals, which were intentionally

oversized to make the worshipper feel tiny before God (Hoffman, 2010). This aspect is completely useless to us, for it is this relationship to God which the modern revolution has upended and has no place in our argument of responsible, personal faith.

Figure 1: Interior of the cathedral of Cologne, France. Notice the change in light qualities from the nave in the center to the aisle, the vaulting of which is just visible on the right of the picture. Photo courtesy of username Goldycan via commons.wikimedia.org. Retrieved 4th of Febrary, 2013. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.

If these broad but important guidelines, those of both atmosphere and ritual, are enough to begin to propel us into a design direction for the worship spaces themselves, we can begin to imagine

the properties of the new typology. We have a large, non-Platonic envelope surrounding the worshipper, irregular in shape and ambiguous in intention. This room is lit with very few internal lights, almost unexposed to the exterior sun save for key skylights and other perforations. In places there is a palpable contrast between the light and the dark, suffusing the remaining interior of the space with a mysterious twilight surrounding the faithful. Here the divine could be hidden, waiting to reveal itself. There is no sound from the exterior world; however the spaces are mostly empty, made of a hard material that produces echoes, the topological curvature of which creates the phenomenon of acoustical creep. Creating a larger complex, there is a series of paths leading to the actual sacred places, perhaps indirect and winding to extend the way-finding based ritual as the faithful approach the chambers themselves. To reduce the risk of being distracted from the hierophany by encounters with others, no more than five spaces are grouped within one larger object.

Although this rough sketch may be a good starting point, not all of the aspects of the sacred have been addressed. The current typology does not offer a preference between the urban chapel and the Temple, but clearly this is an important choice to make for our new singular subjective typology. To choose the urban chapel, in which the space is connected seamlessly to the day to day lives of the population, we risk the population not even realizing that the space is sacred at all. If we create the Temple Mount and its complex, towering glory, we risk alienating the adherents with the same effect. If the ultimate goal is to accommodate the Leap of Faith, to create a space for Musement, we must create a space with a sense of nearness in the interior, and a sense of moderate "otherness" from the outside. We must then examine the idea of the monument and determine whether or not it is conducive to our new philosophy of religion.

CHAPTER V

THE TEMPLE AND THE ALTAR

And the word of the Lord came to Solomon saying, "(Concerning) this house which you are building, if you walk in My statues, and execute My ordinances, and keep all My commandments to walk in them; then will I establish My word with you, which I spoke to David your father. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people, Israel."

-Melachim I 6:11-14

Now Jacob had erected a monument in the place where He had spoken with him, a stone monument, and he poured a libation upon it, and [then] he poured oil upon it.

-Bereishit 35:14

In order to ensure an adequate space for the personal faith we are espousing, we must create a space that is slightly removed from the day to day life of the adherent, yet not so removed that the adherent feels himself removed from it. This balancing act is difficult to perform correctly, and is essentially a question of monument.

These spaces need a certain amount of gravitas to help create nearness, so we must decide on a level in between the non-monument and the monument. We can do this by breaking the full

monument down into its component pieces and incorporating some components that will not alienate the common man.

The monument is a tricky subject to deconstruct. We may attribute some of the problem to the lack of a widely agreed upon definition of what it is in its most shallow terms. Of course there is an ordinary idea of the monument- the somber columns, archways, and other such imagery. However, we must find a more essential definition for our purposes. After all, churches can be monumental; even office buildings can appear to be monumental. So how is a monument defined?

The main question is what factors lend the monument its significance. Why do monuments stand out?

The answer must be in the relationship of the monument to its surroundings. Indeed, many thinkers such as Peter Aureli and Aldo Rossi argue this, though they believe different factors are the key to this significance. Their arguments can be summed up in the terms *component* and *resultant*. The central debate lies in whether or not a monument works as an independent or a dependent variable in the equation that is a city. Both sides argue with merit and all of the factors they list could be potentially used to create our semi-monuments, and thus will be sorted and selected from once both sides have been expounded upon-

In his book, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture,* Pier Vittorio Aureli dissects the idea of architecture in the city, and, as a necessity, the monument. Aureli describes the monuments of a

city as making up a sort of archipelago of sites, and the city as a membrane that encompasses them all into a cohesive area. In Aureli's argument the monument exists as a component of the city. The monument can exist without the city because it has aspects such as size and form that make it a monument on its own. The most frequently cited aspects in the beginning of the book seem to be ties to history. Monuments are first the guardians of the culture of humanity; and thus could exist in a culturally important area without the context of a city to give it vitality or even a specific culture to commemorate. To support this he oft points to Rome and various maps produced of it by Piranesi or to earlier maps of the city drawn in the middle ages. All of these maps show Rome as a desert, sometimes enclosed with a wall, sometimes sutured together by streets. Dispersed throughout, rising up in the desert, monuments stand as testaments to days gone by and the events that have brought humanity to its present state. These maps depict the monuments as "objects floating in empty fields", but this representation does not degrade the monument in any way (Aureli, 2011). Robbed of all context, the monument still stands and is read as a significant place. For Piranesi and his peers, there is an "unbridgeable discrepancy between architectural form and the totality of urban space" (Aureli, 2011).

Aureli continues onwards to note the importance of Éttiene-Louis Boullée's work for the idea of the monument. Boullée continually chooses to show his monuments in a vacuum, once again devoid of all context. However, where the historical monuments of Rome could ostensibly be given independent monumentality because of their historical context and forms, Boullée's drawings could be given no such help. In fact, it was Boullée who first changed the idea of a monument from that of a historical marker only to simply a structure built in testament. It is because of him that "a library is a monument to 'science,' a museum is a temple to 'culture'"

(Aureli, 2011). The grand, geometrically pure ideas of Boullée, most of which were never built, are given monumentality from their size, grandiosity, and their functions. Despite their lack of historical significance, all of these monuments can stand completely alone from their surroundings in conception and importance (Aureli, 2011).

On the other side of the debate comes Aldo Rossi, who in his book *The Architecture of the City* brings about the idea of the urban artifact. An urban artifact is a part of the city born of the history and memory of its inhabitants. It is, simply put, a result of the city. To Rossi, buildings take on memories, emotions and feelings. After all, "there are people who do not like a place because it is associated with some ominous moment in their lives" (Rossi, 1982). Places carry a character. When the people of France ripped up the Bastille brick by brick to declare their independence from the monarchy, it would be silly to argue that they were angry at the prison's form or function in their purest embodiments. For them the Bastille was more than a prison. It was the icon of all of their unfair suffering; symbol of bondage to their unfairly imposed debts; the place where their fathers, mothers, friends, and peers had been wrongly tortured and kept. The new France could not exist as long as the Bastille still stood, but this was not due to any architectural character of the building, only the mental constructions associated with it. It had to be destroyed because the failures of the Bourbon dynasty had retroactively become a part of its very ontology (Rossi, 1982).

I find this to credible, and believe that it can stretch beyond events that happen to buildings after they are constructed. The same effect can happen simply because a building is built on a certain site where something has occurred, like an architectural sponge. The altars of the patriarchs

were not sacred because YHWH blessed them after they were built, but because the Almighty had blessed the place they were built upon. The memory of the blessing was instilled into the altar retroactively. This is the reality of the *genius loci*.

Rossi too uses the *genius loci* in his writings, and hints that we can use the *locus* of a place to add substantial significance to architecture. In this way the monument and its success depends completely on the city because it depends so completely on how people perceive it. If a "bad" site were to be chosen, a site which has memories and messages that run contrary to the idea of the monument, then the monument will lose its value and its monumentality. Inversely, if a monument is placed in an area with strong ties to its message and positive memories, it will be successful. In this way a monument relies completely on its context. To erase all context from around the monument is to erase the monument itself (Rossi, 1982).

We must admit that both arguments have merit and contain aspects that could aid the creation of nearness in our new typology. Instead of simply thinking of the monument in terms of the Temple Mount, we must break it down into two broad symbols- the Temple Mount and the altar. We can visualize the Temple Mount as a component and the altar as a resultant. Both are the embodiment of their respective ideas- the Temple made the surrounding area holy; the altar was built because of the *genius loci*.

In the Temple Mount type we find:

1. *Monument in Form or Material*- The shape and architectural language of a monument creates a feeling of monumentality. This is seen in Solomon's Temple in its towering exterior columns and heavy use of gold, however because it is uncertain how exactly Solomon's Temple looked, it is easier to describe in the sense of monumental columns or the Arch of Titus. The Arch of Titus was monumental simply because it was in the form of a monumental arch.

2. *Monument in Geographical Location*- It is worth noting that this category can be difficult to un-mesh from contextual location, however it must be seen in a purely unsentimental manner. The Temple was located upon Mt Zion, not because Zion had any particular importance when Solomon built it, but because of the visibility of the mountain.

3. *Monument in Size*- Any structure with sufficiently large size and imposing dimensions can be monumental. In this way Boullée's plans were always monuments, simply because they were so large.

4. *Monument in Cultural History*- If a monument commemorates an event or ideal, but in an abstract way, or if the monument is removed from the location of the event it commemorates, then it is not dependent on its urban context for significance. For example, many chapels dedicated to the saints in cathedrals around the world are not located where the events they commemorate occurred. Though these monuments have a cultural and historical context, it is not dependent on the actual environment of the monument.

In the altar type we find:

5. *Monument in Contextual Location*- An urban artifact may gain significance simply from where it is located in the city. Imagine a fountain in the middle of the main plaza of a European city. The fountain is not intended to become a monument when it is built, but by mere central location it becomes one.

6. *Monument in Memory*- As a structure moves through time, memories are collected there. Places have a keen ability to resurrect emotions in human beings. Many a traveler has experienced this effect after they have left Rome. Though a man may not remember what exactly the Trevi Fountain looks like or where it is located in the city, he can always remember the events that transpired there and the feel of the city around it. To the man, the Trevi Fountain exists almost entirely as a memory. The monument is a mental construct.

7. *Monument in Genius Loci*- A monument may be built on a hill, but in this case the hill means something. In this way the Patriarch's altars became sacred because they were built on areas where past heirophanies occurred.

Now that we have gleaned these seven points it would seem that we must simply determine what would be most conducive for the Leap of Faith, however some factors still need to be taken into consideration, factors that have to do with the overall city fabric-

In his canonical work *Collage City*, Colin Rowe, along with Fred Koetter, discusses the "texture" of cities. Rowe makes his point using mostly figure ground maps. He shows how the plans of different cities create a sort of pattern. This is only visually noticeable from the air, but is still surprisingly palpable in the streets. Most of the examples he cites are of European cities, where the texture is denser and more likely to be noticed, but it is important to note that these textures occur in American cities too, simply at a larger scale. Regardless, the point remains that cities have a noticeable texture to them, and every city has a unique texture that defines it (Rowe & Koetter, 1983).

Though Rowe utilizes the argument to argue the physical city, I believe it can be expanded to cover many aspects of urban life- Cities can also have a temporal texture such as Paris, which, due to the homogenized styles, feels of the Napoleonic era. They can have a vertical texture or a cultural texture, and many more as well. These varying textures are fundamental aspects of cities and are, in a large part, the major deciders of how we experience the urban environment.

The ultimate quality of monuments, then, is that they stand out from the texture.

For example, in his thesis on Manhattan, *Delirious New York*, Rem Koolhaas describes the skyscrapers of New York City. In the case of these towers, they were all expected to be monumental when they were built. They relied on monument in size to achieve their goals. He describes them as "Automonuments"; buildings that were to be icons simply because "beyond a certain critical mass each structure becomes a monument" (Koolhaas, 1978).

Koolhaas is incorrect though, because many of these "automonuments" are completely un-noticeable in the New York texture. A tourist in can walk right by the Empire State Building and never even realize that it is there, simply because at street level there is no visible difference. When looking at the skyline the Empire State Building is equally hard to spot, simply because it is surrounded by so many other buildings of similar dimensions and size. Of course, the building is still a monument, but it has become one of memory and history, when it was intended to be a monument primarily in size. This is because skyscrapers are now the texture of Manhattan. Similarly, a historically significant monument would lose its significance if placed in a group of buildings of equal historical importance. A monument in form would lose its significance if surrounded by similar forms or forms in the same architectural style.

Now armed with this refining tool, we can begin to determine, not only what aspects of monumentality would help to produce hierophany, but also what aspects are possible at all. Surely we cannot use all of the Temple's aspects, for we do not want to alienate our adherents. But we cannot rely only on the altar, for we want a structure that is significant to all who approach it, not only those who know the context of the surroundings.

The most practical choice out of the components is without a doubt Location. Form relies too much on the collective typology. We do not wish to associate a removed history with our spaces, which would bias one faith over another. Monumental size is now nearly impossible to accomplish in any large city, especially for single occupancy spaces, and the dwarfing aspects of such structures has already been discussed and dismissed. Thus these last three aspects are not only useless for creating a hierophany, but also run antithetical to our philosophical premise.

From the resultants it is also easiest to choose location, and with some further research, the genius loci is also within our grasp, and could be used to tap into a deeper feeling of nearness, which will be expounded upon later. Although memory will hopefully imbue our object as time goes on, there is no real way to manipulate it except to try and make the worshipper's experience as positive as possible.

We can now use these aspects of monument to add a new layer to our typology. Though the current typology of religious architecture is not concerned with these aspects as a general rule, leaving them up to specific instances; it is imperative that we are careful in choosing these so we can be sure that we have not violated our idea of the responsible, individual, faith.

Before we are finished with our objective, though, we have one more aspect to consider- that of location. Because our idea of the monument rests upon the genius loci and the memory of the site, we must choose an area that will help to lend a sense of nearness to our spaces as best we can. Only then can we be sure that we have created a space that will induce the visitor into a state of hierophany so as to reinforce the personal connection with the eternal or lead one to discover their notion of the holy.

CHAPTER VI

THE SACRED AND THE CITY

"The Heavenly City outshines Rome beyond comparison. There, instead of victory, is truth; instead of high rank, holiness; instead of peace, felicity; instead of life, eternity..."

-Augustine of Hippo

"For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us."

-John Winthrop

If we are to utilize all of the aspects of monumentality that we have deemed appropriate for a non-partial and singularly inhabitable place of worship; we must then decide upon a location that is most likely to help produce a hierophany. Furthermore, if we are to utilize the idea of the genius loci to make our typology semi-monumental, we must determine texture that we can utilize and disrupt to create a sense of otherness.

Our concerns undoubtedly lie within the urban environment specifically, for while the rural man may desire a space to make the existential leap just as much as the urbanite, the rural man already has one. Nature is able to produce a quiet, undisturbed place where Musement may occur, and there is no shortage of natural areas in which a man may seclude himself in the countryside. It may be argued that there are secluded places in cities, and that argument is correct, however the need for a specific architectural space is not related to the creation of

seclusion, but rather the maintenance of it. While the rural man may walk into the woods and be confident he will not be disturbed, the urbanite has no such luxury, no matter how secluded his area of the city. Thus, while the spaces would still be a sound argument of their architectural features and the semi-monument if designed and placed correctly in the country, an urban context is preferred.

In addition to this practical consideration, there has always been a unique relationship between the city itself and the ideas of sacredness that may be a conduit through which we can increase the likelihood of a hierophany. Philip Sheldrake, author of the essay "A Spiritual City", charts the relationship between the city and the sacred. According to him, some have argued that the Bible and the Torah have a distinct opposition to cities and urban life. After all, man's first paradise was the Garden of Eden, a natural habitat; Cain, the first murder, is said to have founded the first town; and the tower of Babel and the city around it were manifestations of "humanity organized against God" (Sheldrake, 2009). However, Sheldrake makes it clear that this argument is only an early view of the relationship and goes on to analyze the writings of St Augustine (Sheldrake, 2009).

Augustine of Hippo decried the amoral state of earthly cities and instead extolled the virtues of God's city in Heaven. While the city of man was based on corrupted human ideas of pride, vanity, greed, and terrestrial power, the city of God was fully based on the holy. Augustine was not so impractical, though, to think that a city could ever become totally of God while populated of man and instead recognized that there was a "secular" part of the city alongside the part which should be given to God. It is important to note that here, secular does not mean "opposed to the

church", but rather "unrelated to religion". The secular parts were the pieces that existed because men needed to live, such as bakeries, shops, homes, and other such structures. I can begin to see the *urbis* (the physical environment) as the secular city and the *civitas* (the relations between people) as the part that would ideally be meant for God. To Augustine, the truly sacred city was not something that could ever be reached, but an ideal to continually strive towards (Sheldrake, 2009). We could say that Augustine saw the sacred city as a place in which a hierophany was being experienced continually by every citizen at every time, a complete impossibility.

These ideas about the relationship between city and sacred changed rather radically as the middle ages came about. After all, in the middle ages the city would have perished if not for the presence of the church, as there was no economic impetus for urban activity in the new society. The only reason cities survived this era was to be a seat of the church, which eventually created economic benefit due to pilgrims (Rossi, 1982). With this, the relationship between the city and the sacred area began to entangle, and the idea of the achievable paradise began to take hold. Cathedrals became not only houses of worship, but also, like the Temple Mount, visible social pyramids, granting the most nearness to the most important members of the urban social web. The city as a whole no longer strived towards the idea of sacredness; it was fully regarded as a large sacred space. In the new urban reality, "there was a clear sense that the city streets embraced a wider sacred landscape" (Sheldrake, 2009). City squares were originally created so that Franciscans and Dominicans could preach the good news to the peasantry. There was no need for a typology of our sort, for a man could experience a hierophany anywhere in the urban environment. Following this idea, Thomas Aquinas praised the idea of the city as a path to redemption through human interaction. After the Renaissance, the sacred was rather slow to

retreat from the public realm, finally releasing during the Enlightenment as centers of learning and human culture came to dominate the neoclassical movement in architecture. By the time of modernism, the relationship had once again entangled, with Le Corbusier and his peers preaching again that the city itself was sacred, yet in a total inverse to the relationship perceived in the middle ages. This was of course upended with the postmodern and thinkers such as DeCerteau and Rossi, who started to disentangle the two ideas into their more recent incarnations (Sheldrake, 2009).

I believe that in this era, the postmodern, the most viable relationship is finally put to paper, revealing a more workable dynamic between the two. Rossi leads us to see the two as interrelated, but in a completely different sense. One is not the other. The two are separate entities, but they are in a symbiotic relationship. The city itself is a collective creation of humanity and all of the aspects of human life, sacred or mundane. Without people there is no city, and, by extension, without the sacred the city does not exist. The individual sacred ideas of all of the urbanites help to make up a city, for "the city and every urban artifact are by nature collective" (Rossi, 1982).

Rossi's evaluation is correct. By using his above theory as a guide, we can begin to divine our own idea of how the city and the sacred influence each other, continually increasing the possibility of the existential leap. Over time the city changes and the collective ideas of its culture become a part of the urban texture. The city texture is a palimpsest of these ideas and those past, which can then be used to inform the monuments (some of which are sacred architecture), built in it. These monuments become magnets for humans and their experiences.

In the case of a sacred space, hierophany after hierophany is experienced. Memory after memory is associated with the monuments which were built from the texture which was built from the collective conscious. These memories become part of the urban conscious itself, which then charges the city, which then can create more urban artifacts, which gather more memories, on and on ad infinitum until the culture is destroyed utterly. If an outside force intervenes and the culture survives the action, the cycle does not stop, but merely absorbs the force into its machinations. Thus the urban environment and the collective idea, which includes the sacred, are in a perpetual cycle of symbiosis. One cannot thrive without the other. They form each other almost simultaneously, creating the machine that is a city, which the sacred is both a resultant and component of. We can argue which came first for all of eternity, but the answer does not fundamentally change the current relationship, merely our perspective of it.

All of this is to say that all of the individual religious experiences experienced in our spaces will then permeate the texture of the city, and every city has a texture of the sacred which we can utilize to achieve our ultimate goal- a space in which one is almost guaranteed to experience a connection with the divine. Although our spaces may be built for the singular subjective subject, the subjective experience goes on to temper all of those that come after.

Because of the relationship Rossi initially describes, when a person moves through an urban context, they are moving through different layers of the palimpsest of the collective consciousness, and also moving through their own past experiences in the area. In her essay "Conditioning Infrastructure," Keller Easterling speaks of the urban planner Benton MacKaye, who would often go on expeditions down the Appalachian Trail. These expeditions were

memory exercises to MacKaye, which he could use to visualize his past experiences or the past of the areas he walked in. His sight-seeing trips were "not purely optical, but rather employed the mental faculties of knowing through seeing, seeing through thinking" (Easterling, Conditioning Infrastructure, 2000). Although MacKaye used these methods to discover natural networks, there is no reason the same technique could not be used in the cities to discover the underlying urban networks, and when a person comes near a sacred space they are automatically reminded of all of their personal religious experiences. If we are to utilize this, we must be sure more than ever that our spaces are located correctly so that they can have an external sense of otherness. Because we are creating a new typology, we must utilize more abstract methods of creating this sense, since we do not have the advantage of an instantly recognizable steeple.

We cannot choose a site that already has religious significance, for that significance will always be biased towards one faith or the other. We must then choose a spot in the texture that gains universal significance, such as a place that simply remains in the memory of a human as they experience the city. We can choose our locations by asking the question- "what is exceptionally significant to a person when they experience a city?" What place stands out?

We have already noted that places of significance and exception in a city fabric become monuments. The answer to our question of location, then, is a deceptively simple one- we must place our semi-monument typology on the pre-existing, universal monuments of the cities. Our semi-monuments can then act symbiotically with their monuments in much the same way as the urban environment and the hierophany. Whatever ideas and significance permeate the current monuments will be granted to our disruptions on them, which will gain significance of their own,

which will be granted to the original monuments, creating a snowball effect. This will create a blip in the city's texture of the sacred, which will instill our spaces with an immense feeling of nearness so that the singular subjective subject can more easily encounter the eternal in whatever way they see fit.

This, unfortunately, means that our spaces would have to be different in every city they were placed in, and besides the general spatial rules given a few chapters earlier, no standard example of our typology can be given that could be adapted to every context. We shall then choose three distinctive urban fabrics in which to further refine our spaces so that the process of creating otherness, at least, can be expounded upon:

Barcelona

The first general archetypal city to be examined, the one with the easiest texture to sense, can be none other than the European city. Made initially for pedestrians, these cities, though they have been altered exceedingly (and sometimes beyond recognition) as they have industrialized and modernized, still retain a distinctly human quality about them. The cities of the old world are anthrophilic in a way the American city has never quite been able to reproduce on a continual scale. They are also filled with historical and cultural richness that spans a longer time period. This abundance of history may make the European city the most clear illustration of the possibilities of the genius loci, for the breadth of time means a larger breadth of different ideas with more extreme differences, and thus a richer history of hierophany with which to color our spaces.

Barcelona is an ideal place in which to study the quintessential European idea of the city. It is pedestrian oriented, makes good use of its many historical buildings, has abundant public space, and, perhaps most importantly, has a history dating back to Roman times. All of these preceding eras can be clearly seen in the modern day city, and Barcelona, perhaps more than other European cities, is a clear chart of the history of urbanism. The Catalan architect Manuel de Solà-Morales certainly praises Barcelona in particular for this aspect in his book *Ten Lessons on Barcelona*:

> There are cities such as Rome and Athens that take their form from their monuments. In other cases, however, the form of the city is discerned above all in the landscape: these would include Florence and Naples, Geneva and Stockholm. The form of the city is always built to a greater or lesser extent from both landscape and architecture.
>
> And there are still other cities, such as Barcelona, where that form has also been the subject of particular reflection; moments in which there has been a conscious and deliberate attempt to link the features of the landscape and the architecture so as to make of their relationship--which might otherwise be casual or incidental--a formal creation in its own right. At these singular moments, in these paradigmatic cities, urbanism introduces its own forms.

Solà-Morales' book itself is a course through these forms, describing ten episodes that create distinct urban textures on the Barcelonan landscape. Although Solà-Morales describes them as a history, I believe that with a careful reading of the text they can be seen as an argument of Barcelona as a mixture of built textures. Indeed the history of the city itself is one of the city connecting disparate villages into one cohesive whole. For Solà-Morales, Barcelona is a patchwork of historical annexations, and each time the towns were annexed, they were connected to the city in a way paradigmatic of the urban ideals of the time. The monuments of Barcelona lie in urban plans, most emblematic of which is the lauded Eixample grid. (Sola-Morales, 2008).

Here we encounter a slight complication with our placement. Though the different styles are tangible as one walks across the city in a straight line or observes the city from one of the surrounding mountains, this is rarely done by the average citizen. If a person remains in one specific area of the city too long, the effect of monumentality wears off. To gain significance we must place our spaces where the difference in textures is significant and eternally fresh in the urbanite's mind. We must them narrow our choice of location to the areas where the change in textures occurs, the lines of streets that run through and dissect the city. We may then further narrow our search with practical considerations for the choice of site. The area must have a bit of space; more than simply the width of a street as is the case with most of these edges. We must find a place that is easily accessed by pedestrians, so a more central part of the city is preferred. We also wish the area to be a bit removed from tourist traffic, as our spaces are not meant for tourists but for citizens. We then choose a site near the Mercat Sant Antoni between the Eixample and El Raval districts of the city, just south of Placa Universitat. The area and its surrounding textures are diagrammed in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: The chosen site amid the monuments of Barcelona, showing the two textures that collide to create the great monument of the city.

Finally we must decide how our choice of site can be used to create a sense of otherness. We have already determined the interior features of the space, which are meant to create a versatile sense of nearness, unaided by the genius loci or site conditions. In the exterior of the structure, however, these two latter conditions do concern us. If we are to use to city's texture of the sacred to abet our worshipers in their quests for individual faith, we must then find a way to separate our spaces from the terrestrial realm, and thus must disrupt the disruption between the city textures. We can do this by cladding the exterior in a reflective material such as chrome, so that when the observer approaches the structure, the texture is disrupted everywhere except for our semi-monument, which due to its non-Platonic shape almost appears as a glitch in the transition between the two. The worshipper can then enter a doorway in the structure and start his or her ritualistic circumambulation towards the space itself, where they may finally take the leap of faith.

To see graphic representation of results in the Barcelonan context, please refer to Appendix A.

New York City

It is here that we break from the archetypal texture and focus on the single instance, albeit the largest singular instance in urban history. This is the idea of New York City, an American city, yet at the same time a city that insulates itself from American culture. This insulation is most emphatic in Manhattan, center of the city and oft declared the center of the universe by eager advertisers and urban aggrandizers.

This is all to say that when we study Manhattan, we are not studying the archetypal American city. Of course, while almost every city has its own identity, the other cities of America are still, in essence, American. New York, by some incredible force of will and disregard for the national consciousness, has become an urban singularity. In a city that itself is so other, how can we imbue our spaces with a greater sense of otherness? How can we hope to facilitate Pierce's Musement in a city so full of the fantastic?

This immersion into the fantastic is seen by some as the defining aspect of New York. In his retroactive manifesto for Manhattan, *Delirious New York*¸ Koolhaas describes the island as a sort of amalgamation of forces and a celebration of the triumph of congestion. More than anything, however, Manhattan is an attempt to create a completely artificial environment. Beginning with Coney Island in the 19th century, Manhattanites have continually strived to create a world of complete artifice, where a person can experience everything ever known in history in one spot. Manhattan is not the center of the universe, Manhattan is an attempt at a microcosmic

reconstruction of it. All attempts to contain this universe have failed spectacularly, and the city is a manifestation of the breathtaking beauty of chaos (Koolhaas, 1978). The city itself is a continual attempt to encounter, not the divine, but the magical and the sensory.

If this is correct, we could then say that New York is a city of artifice, and the only thing that would be other in the city is a completely natural place. This, unfortunately, is impossible to find. Though Central Park immediately springs to mind, we must remember that the Park is just as real and natural as the skyscrapers surrounding it. Though any truly natural space in Manhattan would surely be the perfect place to facilitate a heirophany, there is unfortunately none left, and it is impossible to get back.

However, Central Park is still monumental, and this lies in some other dynamic with the skyscrapers around it. Because the size of the island has forced Manhattan to grow ever skyward, the city has become a city not only of the false, but also of the incredibly dense. This density is both a result and a cause of the current state of the city. The crowded city creates congestion, which means more infrastructure and buildings must be built to serve the people, which cycles through to create more congestion. Koolhaas argues that Manhattan shows the virtues of density:

> "Manhattanism is the one urbanistic ideology that has fed, from its conception, on the splendors and miseries of the metropolitan condition--hyper density--without once losing faith in it as the basis for a desirable modern culture. *Manhattan's architecture is a paradigm for the exploitation of congestion.*
>
> The retroactive formulation of Manhattan's program is a polemical operation.
>
> It reveals a number of strategies, theorems and breakthroughs that not only give logic and pattern to the city's past performance, but whose continuing validity is

> itself and argument for a second coming of Manhattanism, this time as an explicit doctrine that can transcend the island of its origins to claim its place among contemporary urbanisms.
>
> With Manhattan as example, this book is a blueprint for a 'Culture of Congestion.'"

Koolhaas can use Manhattan as an example of the success of congestion and density because they have become components of the city's texture, and are shown throughout the book to be the second most vital component of "Manhattanism", behind the creation of illusion. The skyscraper, in its quest to create an ever more artificial world, has created a density that permeates all aspects of the city (Koolhaas, 1978). To find a suitably significant place in this jumble, we need to find a void in the density.

The solution, then, is Times Square.

The site is perfect. It is a void in a texture of solids, but no so large that we can forget that the solids around it exist. It is centrally located and expresses the rampant capitalism, chaos, and illusion that have created Manhattan. This chaos makes it easy to radically disrupt. Any space so quiet and peaceful as to encourage person meditation runs contrary to Times Square by nature. As an island of respite in this chaotic area, our spaces would assume a degree of significance automatically. As a symbol of the eternal in the realm of the commercial, we could achieve our philosophical aims to reincorporate the worship experience into the daily life of the urbanite. The space becomes a piece of St Augustine's City of God in the secular sphere.

Our chosen site and the area around it can be seen diagrammed in Figure 3 below.

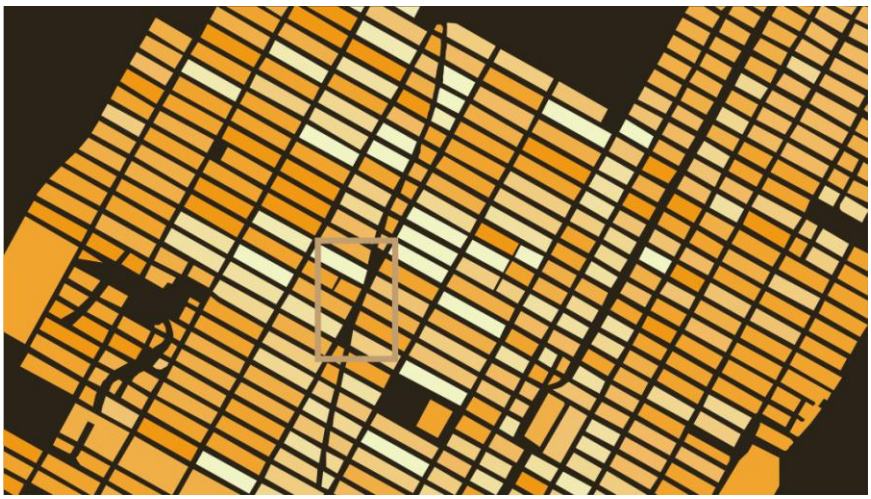

Figure 3: The chosen site, highlighted, appears as a void in the dense texture of Manhattan. The diagram shows the density of construction in the city from none (dark brown) to light (gold) to heavy (cream).

We can a visual sense of otherness by carefully designing the exterior of our spaces. In the bright lights of Times Square, we create a dark object, a blot. Because there is already a police station resting on the ground level, along with the stadium seating on the other side, we must then elevate the space to mid-level in order to make it further stand out. The worshipper climbs up helix shaped stairs towards the spaces, engaging in ritualistic circumambulation. When entered from the chaos of the city streets, our spaces become imbued with such a sense of significance that Musement begins almost automatically as the worshipper begins to process ideas and beliefs they simply cannot sort out in the chaotic city below. Our new typology then succeeds in its purpose.

To see graphic representation of results in the Manhattan context, please refer to Appendix B.

Kansas City

We now turn to our last city type- the archetypal American city. This city last for it is the most challenging to glean a palpable texture from, built outward rather than inward or upward. Unlike New York, the archetypal American city had space aplenty to stretch out in, and thus expensive vertical growth was not initially pursued except when the expense was counterbalanced by the advantages of proximity to the city center. This has been aided by the introduction of such technologies such as the streetcar and the automobile, each of which has allowed the city to spread at a rather constant rate, ever outward without sacrificing convenient travel times.

This is the first difficulty in creating a sense of other in the American city texture-- the texture is so spread out that it can difficult to pin down. In fact, Colin Rowe would probably call the American cities object cities. The entire urban environment, with a few exceptions in the most central downtown areas, is made up of unlinked objects that seem to pay no heed to one another in style or construction. Or even worse and more common in the suburban rings around the city center, the objects are all planned and built at once in the same style, creating a texture that feels completely nonexistent except that of bland, cost-effective and usually post modern banality. After all, a totally smooth texture is really no texture at all.

To give a concrete name and geography to our archetypal idea we choose Kansas City, chosen specifically for its lack of strong identity. However, Kansas City could easily be replaced by Lincoln or Tulsa or Knoxville or any other Midwestern city in the United States. The key is that when one thinks of Kansas City or any place like it, nothing springs immediately to mind. When a person thinks of San Francisco they think of a bridge, and Detroit at least has urban blight, but

Kansas City? It is a blank slate, on which we may easily project our best and worst ideas of the American urban texture.

This lack of a distinctive texture in Kansas City, on first glance, would seem like an insurmountable obstacle. After all, if there is no texture to disrupt our spaces become like the urban chapel, and an adherent could worship in their corner office with the same mundane results. It is not that our new typology and the space to take the leap of faith is not needed here, but what if there is no place for it? This fabric of objects, floating in a tangle of roads and highways, is all-enveloping. If we were to place our space in the anti-texture, it could not be an object or it would be unexceptional. Yet if we added it to an existing building, those two buildings together would be seen as one object and would also be absorbed. Here we can see the root cause of the problem of creating iconic buildings in these cities- as soon as they are built; they become part of the anti-texture.

It is obvious then that we must attempt to read the city in a manner unlike we have read other textural cities to determine the monuments of the American city. We must then look not at the objects of Kansas City, but at the space around the objects- the networks that connect them. This reading of American city organization is shared by Keller Easterling, who discusses the networks that permeate American urban thinking in her book *Organization Space*. In the text, she links the spaces of subdivisions to the highway and roadway network. By connecting the sites in the cities, these networks have come to define the city itself. The American city is all about organization and how people are sorted from one place to the next and "the real power of many

urban organizations lies within the relationships among multiple distributed sites that are both collectively and individually adjustable" (Easterling, Conditioning Infrastructure, 2000).

In light of this reading, we can see the true monument of Kansas City as the highway network which connects the texture together. Indeed the substance of the roadways is a direct opposite of the objects they connect. The objects exist as points in which activities occur. The roads are strands in which no activity takes place except driving. Thus a highway system, being a network, is a disruption of the object-based texture of the city.

We must then find a way to achieve otherness on the highway network in a way that will not bring traffic to a stand-still. For the sake of politeness, we should only try to disrupt the single worshipper's experience of the network. We can do this by having him exit the highway towards the space, then setting him back on the highway when he is finished. Because this is a network and not a singular condition, we may place the spaces throughout the roads instead of gathering them in one space. The network we intend to disrupt may be seen in Figure 4 below.

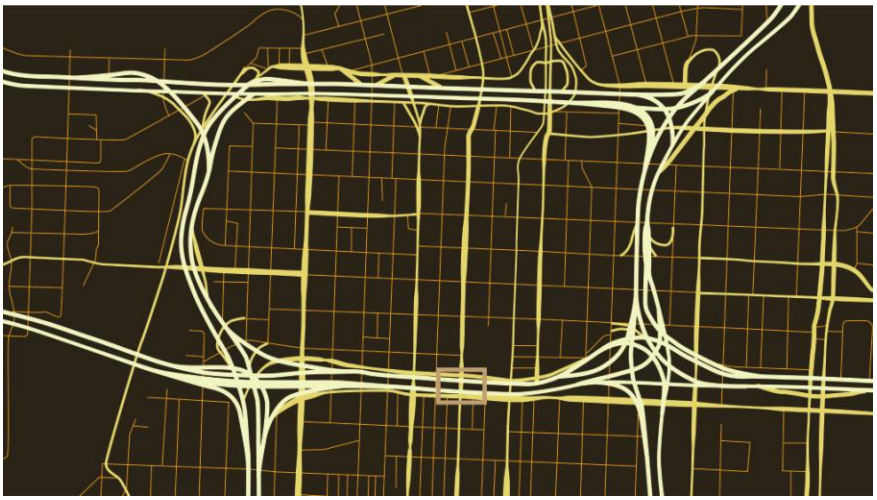

Figure 4: The monument of Kansas City. The three networks of road correspond to different colors- Local (Gold), Major (Yellow), and Highway (Cream). Widths of roads change to show typical intensity of traffic on a weekday afternoon.

As the worshipper exits the network towards our disruption, he is forced to turn several times on the bridge in a peculiar way, thus recreating the winding staircases and rituals of Barcelona and New York, albeit in a way navigated by automobile. Now high above the normal network, the visitor is able to get a broad view of the squat city around him and of the sky above. Our subject exits the vehicle and walks into the space, leaving the other way and continuing on his commute after he grapples with his idea of the holy.

To see graphic representation of results in the Kansas City context, please refer to Appendix C.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

"For I do not seek to understand in order to believe, but I believe in order to understand. For I believe this: unless I believe, I will not understand."

-Anselm of Canterbury

The destruction of the certainty of the metaphysical presence of God has put society into a period of immense chaos with the possibility for unprecedented growth. The resulting responses in architecture have ranged from modernism (an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to establish metaphysical presence in architecture and thus elevate architecture itself into a state of sacredness) to deconstructivism as the work of Darrida came to the forefront of thought. In this continual evolution of the architectural discourse it is imperative to leave no stone unturned.

In the above writing we have attempted to create a new typology for a new singular subjective subject of religion, a subject shift instigated by the statistical shifts in the American religious landscape and reinforced by various post-enlightenment philosophers. The creation of this typology is a complex one, and the attempt to create a universally sacred space that has a real feeling of holiness without the aid of symbol or liturgy has taken us to some areas previously unexploited in sacred architecture. Although the relationships between affect, the semi-monument, and the city are complex and difficult to navigate succinctly, all are useful tools to

create a sense of nearness in a space. A combination of the three is necessary to guarantee a hierophany when we can no longer rely on typological traditions that go back centuries.

It is my hope that this examination will be used as a basis to seriously discuss how we can use architecture to better encourage a responsible personal faith and accommodate the increasing amount of people who are choosing between different belief systems. While the religious pandemonium that has enveloped the post modern world will never be solved by purely architectural means, it is vital that we do what we can to help usher in a new era of existential calm.

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